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Chair: Mr. Tafrov ..... (Bulgaria)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 69: Promotion and protection of human rights (*continued*)

(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives (*continued*) (A/C.3/68/L.42/Rev.1, A/C.3/68/L.56 and A/C.3/68/L.57)

1. **Ms. Astiasarán Arias** (Cuba), speaking on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, said that the members of the Movement continued to strongly oppose the selectivity, double standards and politicization reflected in the four country-specific draft resolutions submitted to the Committee. Such resolutions, which tended to target developing States, breached the principles of universality, objectivity and non-selectivity that should be observed when addressing human rights issues.

2. The Human Rights Council had an important role to play as the United Nations organ responsible for the consideration of human rights situations in all countries within the framework of the universal periodic review. The universal periodic review must be an action-oriented, cooperative mechanism based on objective and reliable information; moreover, it must involve an interactive dialogue with the countries under review, to be conducted in a transparent, non-selective, constructive, non-confrontational and non-politicized manner.

3. Regardless of whether the draft resolutions submitted under the current item were based on facts or allegations, the fact remained that they targeted members of the Non-Aligned Movement on the basis of purely political motivations; as such, they served only to increase the politicization of human rights issues and negatively affected the credibility of the Human Rights Council, which was the competent body to assess the human rights situations in all countries independently of their level of development and political positions. She therefore urged all delegations to vote against the country-specific draft resolutions.

Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.42/Rev.1: Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic

4. **The Chair** announced that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

5. **Mr. Al-Mouallimi** (Saudi Arabia), introducing the draft resolution, said that Albania, Andorra, Austria, Botswana, Colombia, Comoros, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Finland, Georgia, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Monaco, Montenegro, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Seychelles, Somalia, Sweden and Switzerland had joined the sponsors. Since the Syrian Government insisted on clinging to power and continuing to commit heinous crimes against its people, his delegation was regrettably obliged to submit a third draft resolution on the situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic. Recent United Nations reports had indicated that over a hundred thousand people, most of them civilians, had been killed as a result of the conflict, around 9 million people had been displaced, almost half the Syrian population was in severe need of food aid, disease was spreading and the threat of death loomed over 2.5 million people.

6. While the Non-Aligned Movement, of which Saudi Arabia was a member, generally opposed country-specific resolutions, the current draft resolution was a special case; the world could not stand and watch while the Syrian regime committed such abominable human rights violations against its own people. In contrast with the efforts of the Syrian Government to stall international peace talks, the sponsors of the draft resolution called for the convening of a second Geneva conference and the implementation of the communiqué issued on 30 June 2012 by the first Geneva conference on Syria, which had recommended the establishment of a transitional governing body.

7. The references in the draft resolution to the massacre in the Ghouta area of Damascus were justified, since the report of the United Nations Mission to investigate allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic had confirmed that the missiles had been fired from areas controlled by the Syrian Government. The international community must ensure not only that all chemical weapons in the country were destroyed, but also that those individuals responsible for using them were brought to justice. Voting in favour of the draft resolution would reaffirm the human rights principles that formed the pillars of the United Nations; voting against it would only encourage the Syrian regime to continue committing its shameful crimes.

8. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Kiribati had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

9. **The Chair** said that a recorded vote had been requested on draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.42/Rev.1.

10. **Mr. Khazaee** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that his delegation opposed the continued practice of adopting country-specific draft resolutions, which was in breach of the principles of universality, objectivity and non-selectivity. It also undermined efforts to protect human rights through the universal periodic review, which was the principal mechanism mandated to review human rights in all Member States, without distinction. Increasing numbers of illegal acts by terrorist and extremist groups posed an increasing threat in the Syrian Arab Republic; Member States had a duty to support a Syrian-led dialogue aiming to achieve a peaceful political solution, and they should not resort to adopting country-specific draft resolutions. The current text was a deviation from efforts to resolve the Syrian crisis peacefully and contravened international law in letter and in spirit. Moreover, it failed to mention the recent Israeli air strikes and terrorist acts which constituted a violation of Syrian sovereignty. His delegation firmly condemned the use of chemical weapons, for which armed terrorist groups were responsible. For the reasons stated above, his delegation would vote against the draft resolution.

11. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation supported the statements made by the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Cuba regarding the position of the Non-Aligned Movement on country-specific resolutions. His delegation objected to the repeated exploitation of the Third Committee's work to serve political aims. The representative of Saudi Arabia had failed to consult the Syrian delegation regarding the draft resolution and had no right to criticize the situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic, when its own track record in human rights was appalling. Moreover, the Saudi regime was impeding a peaceful, political, Syrian-led resolution to the crisis in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. It was funding armed *takfirist* terrorists — indeed, an attack had been carried out that day in Lebanon by terrorists who followed the Saudi Arabian *takfirist*, Wahhabist, *salafist* doctrine.

12. Saudi Arabia was the only country in the world that had not formally declared its support for a second Geneva conference. It was also actively discouraging opposition groups from participating in such a conference. It was the only country to have refused a visit from the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria. Instead of supporting the efforts of the Special Representative, Saudi Arabia had continued to foment bloodshed through a combination of *takfirist* terrorism and chemical weapons. Respect at the United Nations could not be bought; it could only be earned by respecting the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of international law, which included non-interference in the internal affairs of Member States.

13. Member States should support the Syrian Government in its fight against *takfirist* terrorist groups, for whose survival Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey bore full responsibility. Numerous reports had shown that Saudi Arabia was involved in smuggling thousands of mercenaries into Syria to engage in jihad to change the political situation by force, in flagrant breach of the right of peoples to self-determination. Paragraph 20 of the sixth report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria, had highlighted the convergence of the position of Saudi Arabia with that of Al-Qaida; both had, at the same time, appealed for so-called jihad in Syria and for funds and weapons for armed terrorist groups. Fatwas issued by sheikhs in Qatar and Saudi Arabia referred to Syria as occupied territory and stated that so-called jihad there was a divine commandment. However, Palestine, the Syrian Golan and part of south Lebanon were the true occupied territories, and large parts of Saudi Arabia and Qatar were also occupied in that they hosted foreign military bases. The key to that apparent contradiction had been provided by none other than the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu who, in a recent interview with the French newspaper *Le Figaro*, had said that Saudi Arabia and Israel spoke with the same voice.

14. Saudi Arabia, as a country which had not signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, did not allow its people to participate in political and judicial institutions and denied women their basic rights. Its fatwas banned women from driving a car, travelling alone or even riding a bicycle. It was surreal that such a country could presume to

teach human rights to the Syrian Arab Republic, which had been a State party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights since 1969, and had created its parliament, whose members included women, in 1919. The Saudi regime had arrogated to itself the right to speak for Syrians, but it had been unable to absorb Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter of the United Nations, which prohibited intervention in matters that were essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State. For those reasons and in the interests of maintaining the credibility of the United Nations human rights mechanism, his delegation had requested a recorded vote on the draft resolution and urged Member States to vote against it.

15. **Ms. Solórzano-Arriagada** (Nicaragua) said that her delegation regretted that the Third Committee was once again being exploited to advance political aims through the adoption of country-specific resolutions, which served only to politicize human rights issues. No single country could claim to be the sole defender of human rights; the Human Rights Council, with its universal periodic review, was the main body responsible for assessing human rights in all countries on an equal footing based on the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity and in a spirit of constructive dialogue. For those reasons, her delegation disassociated itself from all decisions taken at the present meeting.

16. **Ms. Al-Thani** (Qatar) said that the draft resolution was a response to the continued flagrant violations of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic. Violence in the country had escalated, civilians had been killed, journalists were being targeted, people were being denied treatment for injuries, many were suffering starvation or being subjected to sexual violence and thousands had been unlawfully arrested and imprisoned. The General Assembly could not stand by while the Syrian regime continued to commit heinous violations of international human rights law on a daily basis. She therefore urged States to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

17. **Mr. Eler** (Turkey) said that his delegation categorically rejected a certain delegation's misrepresentation of the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. It would continue to stand in solidarity with the Syrian people, whose voice could not be heard at the present session.

18. **Ms. Calcinari Van Der Velde** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that her delegation firmly rejected the practice of adopting country-specific resolutions in line with its commitment to peace, mutual understanding and respect for the internal affairs of States. The draft resolution gave a biased account of the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, failed to take account of recent progress achieved voluntarily by the Syrian Government and other interested parties in resolving the crisis, and set undue conditions for a peaceful resolution. The international community should support all efforts made to put an end to the violence and achieve a Syrian-led solution, without any foreign interference. Any action taken by the United Nations must be based on genuine international cooperation, non-selectivity, non-politicization, and respect for the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. Human rights issues should be addressed on equal terms in all parts of the world through the universal periodic review mechanism. Her delegation would therefore vote against the draft resolution and urged other Member States to do the same.

19. **Mr. Koko** (Côte d'Ivoire) announced that his delegation wished to be removed from the list of sponsors.

20. **Mr. Lasso Mendoza** (Ecuador) said that his delegation was concerned about the recent deterioration of the human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. It condemned all human rights violations; there should be no impunity for those responsible for committing acts of violence or supplying arms to parties to the conflict, including to armed terrorist groups. His delegation expressed solidarity with the victims of violence and their families, but would vote against the draft resolution because the text gave an imbalanced, polarized account of the conflict and would not help to achieve a peaceful solution with full respect for Syrian sovereignty and independence. The practice of presenting such draft resolutions to the Third Committee served only to politicize human rights matters that should in any case be addressed by the Human Rights Council.

21. **Mr. Kim Song** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that the draft resolution was not the consequence of alleged human rights violations but an attempt by the main sponsors to misrepresent the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic and exert pressure on its Government. Human rights situations in

all countries should be assessed equally through the universal periodic review on the basis of impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity. Country-specific resolutions were anachronistic and had nothing to do with protecting human rights. For those reasons and in line with the principles of respect for sovereignty and non-interference, his delegation would vote against the draft resolution.

22. **Ms. Belskaya** (Belarus) said that her delegation opposed country-specific resolutions, which contributed nothing to the promotion of human rights, particularly in conflict situations, and lacked the involvement and consent of the States that they targeted. The draft resolution was a tool to exert pressure on the Syrian Government and it undermined the principles of respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations; moreover, its adoption would not promote dialogue between the parties to the conflict, facilitate international efforts to resolve the crisis or lead to a de-escalation of the violence. Her delegation would therefore vote against the draft resolution.

23. **Ms. Astiasarán Arias** (Cuba) said that her Government maintained its position of opposing country-specific resolutions which levelled selective accusations against nations in the South and adopted a selective approach to human rights. It also rejected any attempt to undermine the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic. The international community should support any effort which contributed to safeguarding peace and stability in that country. Her delegation supported all efforts to find a political solution to the current situation and was opposed to punitive and condemnatory measures against the Syrian authorities. Genuine international cooperation — based on the principles of objectivity, impartiality and non-selectivity — was the only way to effectively promote and protect all human rights for all persons. Her delegation would once again vote against the draft resolution.

24. **Mr. Sarki** (Nigeria) said that the human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic was unacceptable. His delegation would have supported a draft resolution that could put an end to the deaths of innocent people and the piecemeal destruction. However, a dispassionate, objective, and peaceful approach was needed; only a political solution based on commitment to dialogue by all concerned parties could bring peace. Ultimately, it was the Syrian people who would continue to bear the brunt of the conflict and the burden of reconstruction, reconciliation and resettlement of refugees and displaced persons. All sides to the conflict must bear responsibility for their actions — whether they sought peace or refused to accept the peaceful settlement of the conflict through dialogue.

25. Country-specific resolutions should be applied as redemptive measures aimed at addressing human rights violations, regardless of where they were committed or by whom. They should be applied prudently and on a case-by-case basis. They should recognize the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, dignity and respect of all countries. In conflict situations involving two or more parties, and in which the responsibility for specific violations was known, it was difficult to realistically implement resolutions that seemed to sanction only one party to the conflict and embolden the other parties rather than lead to dialogue and reconciliation. Only a Syrian-led solution, based on inclusive and transparent negotiations, could bring about an end to the tragic conflict. His delegation called on all parties to the conflict to respect the lives of their fellow citizens, commit to peaceful resolution of the conflict, engage in dialogue, and support the peace process that was under way based on the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012. Because of its principled position against country-specific resolutions, his delegation would abstain from voting on the draft resolution.

26. *A recorded vote was taken on draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.42/Rev.1.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Latvia, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg,

Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tunisia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Yemen.

Against:

Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Zimbabwe.

Abstaining:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Guyana, India, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Philippines, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Singapore, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Tajikistan, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, Zambia.

27. *Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.42/Rev.1 was adopted by 123 votes to 13, with 46 abstentions.*

28. **Mr. Khan** (Pakistan) said that his delegation had supported the draft resolution because of the massive human rights violations taking place in the Syrian Arab Republic. His delegation had repeatedly called for an end to the use of arms and to the military conflict, and for a political solution through diplomacy. In that regard, a second Geneva conference should be convened as soon as possible. His Government had strongly condemned the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, which had killed hundreds of men, women and children. Nevertheless, his delegation would have liked paragraph 1 of the draft resolution to state that the United Nations had yet to assign responsibility for the use of chemical weapons in that country; conclusive evidence was needed before responsibility could be determined.

29. **Mr. Errázuriz** (Chile) said that his delegation had joined in the international community's condemnation of the massive human rights violations in the Syrian Arab Republic. It condemned the use of force against unarmed civilians, and reiterated the need to bring the perpetrators — whether from the Government or the opposition — to justice, including for crimes against humanity. In that respect, he welcomed the fact that the draft resolution reflected recommendations made by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic in various reports. The Commission should be granted the access required to carry out its work. Chile condemned the use of chemical weapons on 21 August, noting that the United Nations Mission to Investigate Alleged Uses of Chemical Weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic had confirmed in its report the relatively large-scale use of such weapons, without explicit reference to the entities in control of the sector from which the arms had been launched. His Government welcomed the Syrian Arab Republic's accession to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. According to Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), no party in Syria should use, develop, produce, acquire, stockpile, retain, or transfer chemical weapons.

30. While recognizing the efforts made by the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and reiterating the important role of regional organizations in maintaining international peace and security, his delegation noted that the decisions and conclusions reached by those entities were only applicable to their members.

31. It was crucial to end the militarization and flow of arms. In that respect, his delegation fully supported the call made by the Secretary General and the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria for parties to seek a political solution to the conflict. An inclusive political

and institutional solution must be forged by the Syrians themselves and should ensure the establishment of a fully democratic State. His delegation looked forward to the early convening of a second conference on the Syrian Arab Republic in order to implement the Geneva communiqué with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic and in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

32. **Mr. Odisho** (Iraq) said that his delegation supported the efforts to find a political solution to the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic, and it strongly condemned the use of internationally-prohibited weapons against unarmed civilians. It also condemned all parties responsible for violating human rights in that country. Although his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution, it had reservations concerning the tenth preambular paragraph, which referred to the League of Arab States resolution 7667 adopted on 1 September 2013. It was important to await the results of the work of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic.

33. **Mr. Patriota** (Brazil) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution. Nevertheless, it opposed the methodology used by several groups of States in negotiating country-specific resolutions that did not allow for an open, democratic consideration of the relevant text. His delegation would have liked the draft resolution to clearly state that there could be no military solution to the conflict. The absence of such an explicit reference had prevented his delegation from voting in favour of the previous General Assembly resolution 67/262 on that subject, adopted in May 2013. Nevertheless, his delegation welcomed the inclusion of language that acknowledged the reports prepared by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic of the Human Rights Council. Their conclusions and recommendations contained strong messages for all parties, including the Syrian Government, and important messages for the international community, the General Assembly and the Security Council.

34. His delegation condemned in particular the continued flow of weapons to Syrian territory, which was contributing to the human rights violations perpetrated there. Furthermore, unilateral sanctions were having a negative impact on the civilian population. His delegation welcomed the acknowledgment of positive developments on the subject of chemical weapons, including the Syrian Government's accession to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction.

35. His delegation strongly encouraged States that recommended the referral of human rights violations to the International Criminal Court to become members of that Court themselves. Brazil valued the efforts of the League of Arab States to engage with the Syrian Government with a view to ending all violence and laying a solid foundation for the establishment of a political dialogue in the country. However, non-member countries were not bound by the decisions adopted by the League of Arab States. He called upon all parties in the Syrian Arab Republic to comply with all relevant United Nations resolutions, and in particular, on that country's authorities to fully implement the recommendations contained in the report of the Commission and to cooperate with the Commission. He reiterated his delegation's call for an immediate end to all forms of violence in that country. Pursuant to article 4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, basic human rights could not be suspended in times of political turmoil or public emergency. Convinced that respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all individuals was essential in order to establish an environment that was conducive to a political settlement in the Syrian Arab Republic, his delegation supported efforts for the early convening of a second Geneva conference.

36. **Ms. Tambunan** (Indonesia) said that country-specific resolutions were often counter-productive to the Committee's joint efforts to promote and protect human rights. Nevertheless, her delegation remained deeply concerned about the ongoing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. In the light of the deaths of thousands of people and the widespread destruction, all parties to the conflict must be urged to immediately cease their acts of violence and hostilities, to demonstrate the utmost respect for human rights and humanitarian law, and to ensure unimpeded and safe humanitarian access to those in need. All parties to the conflict should steadfastly pursue a peaceful resolution to the conflict through an inclusive, Syrian-led political process. Her delegation had thus voted in favour of the draft resolution.

37. His delegation welcomed the emphasis placed in the text on the immediate ending of all forms of violence and the importance attached to unimpeded and safe humanitarian access. It also welcomed the explicit reference to the convening of a second Geneva conference. The international community should stand united in calling for an immediate end to the violence, the provision of humanitarian assistance, and the launching of a Syrian-led political process.

38. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his Government strongly condemned the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. The regimes of Saudi Arabia and Qatar were responsible for sending such weapons to *takfirist* groups for use in Syria, a situation of which his Government had formally warned the United Nations in identical letters to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council in December 2012. In addition, in March 2013, only 18 hours after chemical weapons had been used by terrorist groups in the Khan al-Assal area of Aleppo province, his Government had requested the United Nations for assistance in establishing, first, whether chemical weapons had been used and second, the identity of the perpetrators. The Secretariat had recused itself from responding to the second part of the request. Furthermore, the massacre in the Ghouta area of Damascus had been perpetrated by the same terrorist groups responsible for the attack in Khan al-Assal, which had attempted to thwart the investigations of the United Nations Mission to Investigate Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

39. Given that Saudi Arabia had refused to receive any Syrian refugees and had recently elaborated a plan to expel 5 million foreign workers in the space of five days, Saudi Arabia could not claim to be genuinely concerned with defending human rights. The draft resolution would do nothing to end the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic. His delegation supported the convening of a second Geneva conference and all efforts to promote peace based on Syrian-led dialogue. Pressure must be exerted on the regimes of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey to end their lies, double standards and deceitful practices, which were fuelling the Syrian crisis.

40. **Ms. Perceval** (Argentina) said that the humanitarian and human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic was the result of the uninterrupted militarization of the conflict and the growing violence being exercised against the civilian population. The only possible solution to the crisis was through political dialogue without preconditions and involving all sectors of Syrian society. Her delegation had supported initiatives on human rights and humanitarian situations in that country at meetings of the Committee, the Human Rights Council and the Security Council, as such initiatives sent a message to all parties to put an end to the violence in the country and called for a negotiated political solution.

41. The draft resolution contained elements of great importance, including the condemnation of all violations of human rights and international humanitarian law; the call for an immediate end to that situation; the reference to the use of chemical weapons as a serious crime and a crime against humanity; the reference made to referring the case on the Syrian Arab Republic to the International Criminal Court; support for the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012 and any initiative seeking a political solution to the crisis; and the recognition of the efforts being made by neighbouring countries in the region to provide assistance to the overwhelming number of refugees. In that respect, her delegation vehemently condemned the terrorist attack against the Iranian embassy in Beirut, which had taken place that day. It extended its condolences to the victims' families and expressed its solidarity with those injured and with the Governments and people of Lebanon and Iran. That act of extreme violence was also a sign of instability caused by the exacerbation of the tensions in the region.

42. Nevertheless, her delegation could not support some aspects of the draft resolution that extended well beyond humanitarian and human rights matters. First, although some of her delegation's concerns had been incorporated in the text, draft resolutions should be open to broad consultations, to ensure a more representative a message with a greater impact. Second, while the Syrian Government bore primary responsibility for protecting and guaranteeing human rights in the country, it was crucial to recognize that the armed opposition groups had committed war crimes and crimes against humanity and serious human rights and international humanitarian law violations that should have been reflected in a more balanced way in the document. Third, the United Nations Mission to Investigate Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic had a strict mandate to determine whether chemical weapons had

been used in the Syrian Arab Republic, but not by whom, nor did the General Assembly have a mandate to identify responsibility. Yet, the draft resolution intimated that the Syrian Government was responsible for the attacks of 21 August in the Damascus area. Her Government would leave the attribution of responsibility to judicial institutions. In the meantime, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, it would continue to support the implementation of its resolution 2118 (2013) on the elimination of the chemical weapons programme in the Syrian Arab Republic. Fourth, her delegation disassociated itself from any reference made to the decisions of organizations of which Argentina was not a member, and negotiations in which it had not participated, such as in the tenth preambular paragraph and paragraph 19 of the draft resolution. Lastly, her delegation regretted that the draft resolution had not included an explicit request to avoid further militarization of the crisis, including a call to halt the supply of arms to all parties in the conflict.

43. In May 2013, a diplomatic initiative by the Russian Federation, with support from the United States of America and most of the international community, had opened the door to a political solution to the crisis. Steadfast efforts must be made in the context of the international conference to implement the Geneva communiqué.

44. **Ms. Ilić** (Serbia) said that her delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution, aware of the deterioration of the human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic and out of concern for the suffering of civilians, particularly women and children, in the ongoing conflict. The main goal of the draft resolution was to ensure respect for and protection of human rights and international humanitarian law by all sides in the conflict, while the establishment of accountability for the use of chemical weapons was within the mandate of other relevant United Nations bodies.

45. **Ms. Tham** (Singapore) said that her delegation maintained its principled position against country-specific resolutions. Its abstention should not be considered to imply a particular position on the human rights situation in the country concerned, or as condoning the mistreatment of citizens. Singapore remained deeply concerned about the deteriorating situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, which had already claimed many innocent Syrians, had displaced millions of persons and affected stability in the region. Her delegation had also specifically condemned the use of chemical weapons in that country, and called upon all Member States to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

46. **Mr. Viktorov** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation had voted against the draft resolution, which had been submitted in an attempt to turn the Committee into a body that rubber-stamped politicized country-specific resolutions as a means of exerting pressure on a Member State's Government. That approach was unacceptable. The document had generated an atmosphere of confrontation and distrust in the General Assembly at a time when the international community needed to work together to achieve a political and diplomatic solution to the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic. The joint initiative of the Russian and United States delegations to convene an international conference on the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic needed unconditional support. Strong signals should be sent to both sides of the Syrian conflict to immediately start dialogue in order to end the violence and implement a political transition based on the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012.

47. The draft resolution went against the logic of a political and diplomatic solution by placing the main responsibility for the situation in the country on the Government, while it was the foreign-based opposition that should be urged to start negotiations with the authorities. The draft resolution undermined the positive impetus from the framework agreements between his country and the United States on eliminating chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, as enshrined in Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), which unconditionally approved the Geneva communiqué.

48. The draft resolution made sweeping accusations against the Syrian authorities, in relation to human rights violations, but made no reference to the many crimes of the anti-government armed groups or the often cruel torture and killings of civilians, shelling of civilian neighbourhoods, schools and other civilian facilities, or to hostage-taking and the ethnic cleansing raids against Christian, Alawite and Kurd neighbourhoods. The draft resolution requested that the Syrian authorities ensure access to humanitarian assistance, but ignored the fact that the main threat to humanitarian operations in the country came from the armed opposition groups that had seized built-up areas,

were using citizens as human shields and were impeding the establishment of a humanitarian truce.

49. The presidential statement of the Security Council of 2 October 2013 had condemned the terrorist attacks carried out by organizations and individuals associated with Al-Qaida and called on all parties to commit to putting an end to terrorist acts. Yet the sponsors of the draft resolution clearly sought to conceal the presence of international terrorism in the Syrian Arab Republic. His delegation was committed to swiftly achieving a peaceful settlement in that country, and was doing its utmost to ensure that the second Geneva conference was convened as soon as possible.

50. **Mr. Wang** Min (China) said that his delegation had long been concerned at developments in the Syrian Arab Republic; a political solution was the only way forward for the international community. His delegation supported the efforts on verification of the elimination of chemical weapons being carried out by the United Nations and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and stood ready to work with all parties concerned to ensure that the international conference to implement the Geneva communiqué could be convened as soon as possible. The political process should be led by the Syrian people. His Government could support and respect any solution that was acceptable to the parties to the conflict, and would endeavour to help ensure that a comprehensive and long-term solution to the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic could be found.

51. **Ms. Loew** (Switzerland) reiterated her delegation's firm condemnation of all human rights and international humanitarian law violations in the Syrian Arab Republic, regardless of their origin. The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic must be granted access to the country so that the facts and chains of responsibility could be determined, and the perpetrators of the violations of international humanitarian law brought to justice. Her Government had requested very early on that the Security Council should refer the situation to the International Criminal Court. She urged all stakeholders to strive to ensure the early convening of an international conference to implement the Geneva communiqué in order to halt the escalation of violence and restore respect for international humanitarian law.

52. **Mr. Sparber** (Liechtenstein) said that his delegation wished to underscore the need to strengthen the international community's call for accountability in the Syrian conflict. Without a doubt, serious crimes continued to be perpetrated in that conflict; the use of chemical weapons in the Ghouta area of Damascus was only one in a long list of atrocious crimes committed by both sides to the conflict, albeit on different scales. In its latest report, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry had noted that the perpetrators were undeterred and did not fear future accountability. His delegation hoped that the General Assembly would take a stronger stance in the future, including by calling on the Security Council to refer the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic to the International Criminal Court. Accountability for serious crimes was integral to any attempt at forging sustainable peace. It was thus regrettable that issues of accountability continued to be sidelined in the international community's discussion of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.56: Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

53. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

54. **Ms. Kazragienė** (Lithuania), speaking on behalf of the European Union, Japan, and the other sponsors, said that Bosnia and Herzegovina, Marshall Islands, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Serbia and Seychelles had joined the sponsors. Although the draft resolution took note of some positive steps taken during the past year by the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including its recent signature of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, those developments were outweighed by a general deterioration in the overall human rights situation, with substantive improvements still lacking.

55. Very serious concerns were outlined in the draft resolution, but regrettably, the Government had as yet refused to cooperate fully with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and with the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including by granting full, free and unimpeded access to the country. That State must also engage in negotiations on the human rights issues covered in the draft resolution. The sponsors strongly urged the Government to immediately put an

end to the human rights violations in the country. It was the Committee's responsibility to speak out on behalf of the victims in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by adopting the draft resolution; failure to do so would send the political signal that the situation had improved, which was not the case.

56. **Mr. Kim** Song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that his Government rejected the draft resolution, which was politically motivated and based on fabrications arising from the United States' hostile policy against his country in the context of its North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004. The draft resolution also served as political propaganda by the United States of America and its followers — the European Union and Japan in particular — aimed at undermining the realities of his country's political and social system. The draft resolution used human rights as a pretext to turn its people against the Government and bring about a regime change, which was an act of State-led political terrorism. The human rights issues mentioned in the draft resolution did not exist in his country, where human rights and fundamental freedoms were fully guaranteed.

57. His Government had been warning of the negative impact of the adoption of such draft resolutions on global efforts for the promotion and protection of human rights since the Committee's first adoption of such a resolution in 2005. It had also advised the European Union to withdraw the draft resolution and engage in dialogue. Nevertheless, the United States pursued its efforts against his Government year after year, and continued to exert pressure on small developing countries into supporting the adoption of the draft resolution; there was thus no justice or impartiality, and nothing to gain from the adoption of a draft resolution through political and economic pressure. The draft document only served to block dialogue and cooperation among the countries concerned and resulted in distrust and confrontation.

58. **Mr. Yoshikawa** (Japan) said that the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continued to be a serious concern for the international community. His delegation strongly welcomed and supported the work of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and noted the Government's refusal to cooperate with the Commission at any level, or with the other human rights mechanisms of the United Nations. The issue of abductions remained a cause of deep concern for the international community, including for his Government, as 12 of the 17 Japanese citizens who had been identified by the Government of Japan as victims of abduction by the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had not yet been able to return to their homeland, and there were also other cases of possible abduction. Against that backdrop, it was critical to reiterate the international community's grave concern about the situation. His delegation hoped that the adoption of the draft resolution would contribute to a solution to the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and urged that country's Government to heed the message of the United Nations in good faith and respond to the international community's concerns.

59. *Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.56 was adopted.*

60. **Mr. Khazaee** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation had decided to disassociate itself from the draft resolution because of its firm position against country-specific resolutions; the exploitation of that mechanism, in the Third Committee in particular, ran counter to the principles of universality, non-selectivity and objectivity that should be observed when addressing human rights issues and it undermined the cooperation that was crucial for the promotion of all universally-recognized human rights.

61. **Mr. Patriota** (Brazil) said that his delegation had joined the consensus on the draft resolution. It had taken note of the positive developments in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, particularly its signing of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and encouraged that country's Government to take further steps for ratification and to strengthen its cooperation with the United Nations, especially the Commission of Inquiry and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Nevertheless, the human rights situation in the country remained of concern. His delegation therefore urged all States to provide assistance to improve the situation. It also called upon the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to step up the process in the framework of its agreement of 23 August 2013 with the Republic of Korea to resume reunions of separated families, and urged it to resolve the matter of the abduction of Japanese citizens, including by allowing the return of those persons to their home country.

62. **Ms. Tham** (Singapore) said that her delegation maintained its principled position of being opposed to the adoption of country-specific resolutions, but had joined the consensus as there had been general agreement with the draft resolution.

63. **Ms. Khvan** (Russian Federation) said that her delegation had repeatedly opposed the practice of selective and unilateral country-specific draft resolutions in the Committee. That practice was ineffective and exacerbated confrontation among Member States. While the international community should provide technical assistance in the area of human rights, the primary responsibility for promoting and protecting those rights lay with the States themselves. The United Nations already had a negotiating platform for the consideration of human rights situations in different countries: the universal periodic review, which provided opportunities for constructive dialogue in the area of human rights and was the appropriate framework for consideration of human rights situations in individual countries. For those reasons, his delegation could not support the draft resolution and disassociated itself from the consensus on its adoption.

64. **Mr. Kommasith** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that although his delegation had joined the consensus on the draft resolution, that should not be understood as support for country-specific resolutions, which was a selective approach that did not help to address human rights situations. The Human Rights Council and the universal periodic review mechanism were the only appropriate forums for discussing or reviewing the human rights situation in any Member State on an equal basis and without prejudice, double standards or politicization.

65. **Ms. Astiasarán Arias** (Cuba) said that his delegation maintained a firm principled position against country-specific resolutions and selective mandates against nations in the South, as they did not foster cooperation or dialogue, which were so crucial to the work of the United Nations system. The Human Rights Council and its universal periodic review mechanism provided an opportunity to consider human rights situations in all countries on an equal footing and on the basis of constructive dialogue. Only genuine international cooperation based on the principles of impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity could ensure the promotion and protection of human rights. Her delegation had therefore disassociated itself from the consensus on the adoption of the draft resolution.

66. **Ms. Calcinari Van Der Velde** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that, in accordance with the principles guiding her Government's foreign policy, her delegation had disassociated itself from the consensus on the draft resolution because country-specific resolutions undermined efforts at constructive negotiations and dialogue among parties, efforts which should be free of undue pressure or conditionalities. The universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council was the ideal tool for the impartial, objective and non-selective review of human rights situations in any country in the world. It was through genuine dialogue and cooperation among parties that conflicts should be resolved.

67. **Mr. Lasso Mendoza** (Ecuador) said that the universal periodic review mechanism was the appropriate means for reviewing human rights situations in the world, through clear, non-politicized procedures on an equal basis. All concerned countries should thus contribute to that mechanism. His delegation's position on country-specific resolutions was without prejudice to its position on the human rights situation in the countries concerned. Such resolutions did not help to improve the situation, and only undermined relations between States and hindered constructive dialogue and international cooperation.

68. **Ms. Belskaya** (Belarus) said that her Government maintained a position of principle against country-specific resolutions that established or promoted procedures without the agreement of the country concerned. Despite the adoption of similar resolutions for a number of years, they had not led to a productive dialogue among the interested parties. At the same time, their implementation, in particular the activities of the Special Rapporteur, carried significant budgetary implications. As the initiative did not genuinely promote human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Belarus disassociated itself from the consensus on that resolution.

69. **Mr. Kim** Song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that his delegation categorically rejected the draft resolution, which would have an adverse impact on the Korean Peninsula and the already deadlocked dialogue between his Government and the European Union. The main sponsors of the resolution should reflect on human rights violations in their own

countries, which included mass killings of innocent civilians, defamation of religion, racial discrimination and mistreatment of immigrants.

70. The conduct of the Government of Japan was particularly shameful, considering that the abduction issue had been completely resolved through efforts made by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to implement the Pyongyang Declaration. On the other hand, the fate of 8.4 million Koreans abducted and forcibly drafted by Japan and the 200,000 women forced into sexual slavery during its military occupation were still unknown. Japan's aim was to avoid its responsibility for past crimes. He reminded the Committee of the 1996 report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, which had called for Japan to publicly apologize, pay compensation to individual women victims and set up a special administrative tribunal to punish the perpetrators of crimes against humanity. Lastly, he thanked those States that had dissociated themselves from the consensus on adoption of the resolution.

71. **Mr. Zhang** Guixuan (China) said that China disassociated itself from the consensus on the resolution. His Government had consistently maintained that human rights issues should be addressed through constructive dialogue and cooperation as opposed to country-specific resolutions. Politicized criticism and pressure would only lead to confrontation. As such, China called on the international community to assess the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in an objective, impartial manner, adopt a pragmatic, constructive attitude and pay closer attention to its economic and social development challenges. In that way a genuine contribution could be made to the economic and social development of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the stability of the Korean Peninsula.

72. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his Government disassociated itself from the consensus on the resolution for the same reasons presented by the representative of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. It maintained a position of principle against country-specific resolutions whereby one State could interfere in the internal affairs of another on the pretext of promoting and protecting human rights. That noble concept should not be politicized or used as a bargaining tool to pressure States. The protection of human rights was a matter that should be dealt with by the Human Rights Council, through the impartial mechanism of the universal periodic review.

Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.57: Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran

73. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

74. **Mr. Rishchynski** (Canada) expressed sympathy to the victims of that day's terrorist attack in Lebanon, and deplored the loss of life caused by the shocking violence.

75. Introducing the draft resolution, he said that the delegations of New Zealand, Republic of Moldova, San Marino and Seychelles had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran should demonstrate a sincere commitment to addressing human rights abuses by allowing the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran to visit the country. The Third Committee, as the only United Nations body responsible for addressing international human rights issues, should demonstrate the support of the international community for the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran by supporting the resolution.

76. **Mr. Khazaee** (Islamic Republic of Iran) expressed his delegation's outrage at the terrorist attack in Beirut, which had led to the death and serious injury of many people, including Iranian citizens. He said that his country had been the target of the attack, which was just one of the many ills that it had suffered, in addition to war, assassinations, the bombing of holy and official places, and the imposition of sanctions and resolutions.

77. Before taking action on the draft resolution, the Third Committee should consider whether that approach had ever contributed to the promotion and protection of human rights or whether it had only served to further the political objectives of its initiator. Canada had no representation in Iran and therefore had no accurate information about the situation on the ground. Resolutions submitted to the General Assembly should not be based solely on isolated human rights cases.

78. The Government of Canada had committed many human rights violations against the indigenous peoples and minorities in its country, and had deprived hundreds of thousands of Iranians, including Iranian-

Canadians and their families, of consular services following the severing of diplomatic relations. Canada also supported the Israeli regime, another sponsor, which had committed gross human rights violations against the Palestinian people.

79. The draft resolution relied on poorly resourced and outdated allegations and did not take note of the enormous progress made by his country, including the growing participation of Iranian women in all areas of society. It also did not take into account the unilateral and extraterritorial sanctions imposed against the Iranian people, and ignored the high level of participation in the most recent presidential election. In addition, the resolution requested reports from both the Secretary-General and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, which would result in duplication, redundancy and financial implications, all of which had been previously rejected by Canada.

80. The Islamic Republic of Iran had often repeated its intention to cooperate with United Nations human rights mechanisms, had consistently reported to the relevant treaty bodies, and was legally bound to implement its international obligations. It had defended its most recent periodic report on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 2012 and had appeared before the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 2013. Since the time of the universal periodic review, the relevant authorities had cooperated in the implementation of 123 recommendations. In addition, his Government had extended an invitation to the High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit the Islamic Republic of Iran.

81. All ethnic groups were fairly represented in his country and participated actively in political, electoral, local and national decision-making activities. A Committee had been established to draft a charter of citizenship rights. In addition, all legal complaints filed against journalists had been withdrawn, and a number of women had been promoted to positions of authority. His Government had taken a long-term approach to safeguarding the human rights of its citizens by ensuring compliance with all relevant international human rights commitments. The draft resolution did not acknowledge the positive human rights developments in Iranian society. In view of those considerations, he requested a recorded vote on draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.57 and urged all delegations to vote against it.

Statements in explanation of vote before the voting

82. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that it was inappropriate to adopt a draft resolution on human rights in the Islamic Republic Iran on the same day that its embassy in Beirut had been attacked by *takfirist* terrorists who had killed tens of innocent people. His Government expressed its condolences to the Governments and peoples of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Lebanon and welcomed the Security Council's prompt condemnation of the attacks. All such attacks must be eliminated before they spread to other Member States.

83. His delegation rejected intervention in the domestic affairs of any State for political motives under the pretext of defending human rights. Situations of human rights must be addressed by the Human Rights Council in a spirit of objectivity, non-selectivity and respect for national sovereignty. His delegation objected to the exploitation of the work of the Third Committee to advance States' political aims and welcomed the positions of principle stated by some delegations against politically-motivated draft resolutions. For the reasons given, his delegation would vote against the draft resolution.

84. **Ms. Belskaya** (Belarus) said that the universal periodic review mechanism embodied the principles of non-selectivity, transparency, objectivity, impartiality and respect for national sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs. It had already demonstrated its effectiveness in addressing human rights-related issues both in the global context and in the case of individual countries.

85. The Islamic Republic of Iran had undergone the universal periodic review process and had successfully carried out the relevant recommendations; however, the authors of the draft resolution, using subjective approaches and standards, had distorted the situation in the country and its efforts and achievements in connection with the promotion and protection of human rights. As just one example of such progress, the Islamic Republic of Iran had achieved a high ranking in relation to the human development index and was a regional leader for various indicators of social, economic and political development.

86. The draft resolution was being used to exert additional pressure on the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and justify the political and economic sanctions that had already been imposed on it. Belarus

would vote against the draft resolution and called on the other delegations to do the same.

87. **Ms. Astiasarán Arias** (Cuba) reiterated his delegation's position of principle against country-specific resolutions and selective measures against countries of the South. The effective promotion and protection of human rights could only be achieved through cooperation and dialogue and with the involvement of the country concerned. The establishment of the Human Rights Council, in particular the universal periodic review mechanism, had made it possible to consider the situation of human rights in all countries equally through constructive dialogue and cooperation based on the principles of objectivity, impartiality and non-selectivity. For those reasons, her delegation would vote against the draft resolution.

88. **Mr. Kim** Song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that his delegation was deeply concerned at the lack of fairness and impartiality demonstrated when addressing the issue of human rights. His Government firmly believed that the human rights issues of individual countries should be addressed within the framework of the universal periodic review mechanism rather than by the Third Committee. The draft resolution on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran was clearly politically motivated tool and would undermine trust among potential partners. In view of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's principled position against the use of politics, double standards and selectivity in the area of human rights, his Government would vote against the draft resolution.

89. **Ms. Hassan** (Djibouti), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), said that OIC opposed country-specific resolutions on human rights, which selectively targeted some developing and Islamic countries, and changed the work of advancing the cause of human rights into a political exercise. The draft resolution in question contravened the spirit of cooperation necessary to address the issue and failed to reflect the real situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran. It was regrettable that, despite positive developments in that country and its cooperation in the framework of the universal periodic review, a draft resolution had nevertheless been submitted. OIC urged all States to oppose the draft resolution.

90. **Ms. Calcinari Van Der Velde** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that her delegation would vote against the draft resolution, which was based on a highly politicized approach and did not reflect the reality of the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran. No State had the moral authority or the power to reflect on the human rights situation of any other State. The undue pressure that such initiatives brought to bear on the countries concerned only compounded the various obstacles to dialogue and cooperation.

91. The Human Rights Council, in particular the universal periodic review, used appropriate methods to ensure the impartial, objective and non-selective consideration of human rights situations. Transparent international cooperation should prevail against strategic confrontation and should be promoted in strict compliance with the spirit and letter of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular the principle of non-intervention in internal affairs and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.

92. **Ms. Khvan** (Russian Federation) said that her Government had consistently opposed the introduction of country-specific resolutions. The universal periodic review mechanism had been established specifically to address the human rights situations in any country, and it had demonstrated its effectiveness and efficiency in that regard. The Russian Federation was surprised by the sponsors' persistence in presenting a draft resolution on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran every year. Her delegation would vote against the draft resolution.

93. **Mr. Fiallo** (Ecuador) said that Ecuador fully supported the work and institutions of the Human Rights Council, which was the appropriate body for consideration of human rights situations, and urged all countries to contribute to the universal periodic review process. Country-specific resolutions were detrimental to relations between States, constructive dialogue and international cooperation. His Government rejected the continued harassment of countries for political reasons and would therefore vote against the draft resolution.

94. *A recorded vote was taken on draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.57.*

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde,

Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Serbia, Seychelles, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tonga, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Vanuatu.

Against:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Armenia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cambodia, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Nicaragua, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Russian Federation, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Zimbabwe.

Abstaining:

Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahrain, Benin, Bhutan, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Iraq, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Libya, Jamaica, Jordan, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Philippines, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, South Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Yemen, Zambia.

95. *Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.57 was adopted by 83 votes to 36, with 62 abstentions.*

96. **Ms. Sutikno** (Indonesia) said that the international community should make collective efforts based on mutual respect, dialogue and cooperation to promote and protect human rights at the global level. The universal periodic review played an important and positive role in strengthening such efforts. Indonesia welcomed the positive pledges and commitments of the new Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding the promotion and protection of human rights. The international community should allow the Islamic Republic of Iran the necessary space for implementation of those pledges and commitments. In light of those considerations and the lack of constructive engagement and genuine dialogue between the proponents of the resolution and the Islamic Republic of Iran, Indonesia had voted against the draft resolution.

97. **Ms. Morgan** (Mexico) said that her Government had voted in favour of the resolution because of the continued violations of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran. However, the resolution should have incorporated more constructive, encouraging language in light of the commitments and efforts made by the new Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in particular on account of its cooperation with the Human Rights Council.

98. **Mr. Ruidiaz** (Chile) said that all States should make use of the mechanisms of the Human Rights Council. However, when that was not possible, the international community should support the right and obligation of the General Assembly to take action in situations where there were serious, recurring violations of human rights. His delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution, although it did acknowledge the commitments made by the new President and the progress achieved by the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Government of Chile hoped that those commitments would become concrete actions to address the principal concerns expressed by the international community.

99. **The Chair** said that, as the meeting had continued far beyond its scheduled time, the interpreters would have to leave. He took it that the Committee agreed to continue the meeting in English only.

100. *It was so decided.*

101. **Mr. Patriota** (Brazil) said that his delegation had abstained from voting on the resolution because the text did not adequately reflect the current situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The release of political prisoners, the drafting of a bill of citizen's rights, the appointment of a special assistant for minority affairs, and the appointment of women to positions of authority were all factors to be noted. However, Brazil remained deeply concerned about the rights of minorities, in particular those of the Baha'i community. His Government invited the Islamic Republic of Iran to strengthen cooperation with the United Nations human rights system by allowing the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran to visit the country.

102. **Ms. Boissiere** (Trinidad and Tobago) reminded the Committee that the Human Rights Council had been established to address violations of human rights in Member States, in particular through the universal periodic review process and the special procedures mandate holders. The human rights treaty bodies also addressed such violations.

103. The resolutions on the situation of human rights in certain countries appeared to be politicized and selective. The Human Rights Council and treaty bodies should be allowed to discharge their mandates and engage in the impartial examination of human rights violations in any Member State. Since her Government subscribed to the view that mutual dialogue, cooperation and understanding were key to improving human rights situations, it encouraged all Member States to cooperate with the Human Rights Council, special procedures and treaty bodies in that regard. For those reasons, Trinidad and Tobago had abstained from the voting on draft resolutions A/C.3/68/L.57 and A/C.3/68/L.42.

104. **Mr. Hisajima** (Japan) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the resolution, but had not become a sponsor. The Government of Japan had held the ninth Japan-Iran Human Rights Dialogue in September 2013, and welcomed the agreement of the Islamic Republic of Iran to continue that dialogue and also other positive events, such as the increased participation of women in society. It hoped that the Islamic Republic of Iran would continue to engage with the international community and cooperate with special procedure mandate holders and other human rights mechanisms.

105. There were a number of outstanding issues requiring improvement, including the restriction of peaceful assembly and association, freedom of opinion and expression, the use of cruel punishment and the execution of juveniles. Japan welcomed the pledges made by the new President to prioritize the issue of human rights. It was important to build confidence between the international community and the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Japan would continue to actively engage in constructive dialogue and cooperation with that country in order to achieve further improvement the in human rights situation.

106. **Mr. Taula** (New Zealand) said that, while the reported situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran deserved the full attention of the international community, his delegation recognized that many of the reported human rights violations had occurred during the term of the previous President. Although significant change in the situation would require time, his Government expected the Islamic Republic of Iran to prioritize the improvement of human rights. New Zealand had sponsored the resolution in the hopes that it would serve as a benchmark for measuring future progress. His delegation encouraged the Islamic Republic of Iran to view the resolution in a similar light.

107. **Mr. Caboche** (France) said that his delegation wished to place on record its view that the Chair's decision to continue the meeting without interpretation should not be considered a precedent.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.